

YAMPA MANAGEMENT PLAN/PBO UPDATE
for the April 20, 2001 I&E Committee Meeting
by Gerry Roehm

- Yampa Management Plan was revised March 30, 2001 and posted to the listserver April 12.
- Water Subcommittee requested an opportunity to review before the plan became “final.” Granted a 2-week review period (comments due by April 27)
- If no major changes are needed, a “final” draft will be posted by May 4, 2001, with hard copies to be mailed out within a week of posting to RIP committee members, YRBP steering committee and others who request copies. In addition, I will distribute copies to Routt/Moffat County Commissioners’ offices and libraries in Steamboat Springs/Craig; copies also will be provided at site(s) in Wyoming (to be specified).
- Expect to hold public meetings in the basin the week of May 14-18 or May 29-June 1. Three meetings 2-3 hours long are planned on three consecutive nights: 1) Steamboat, 2) Craig, and 3) Baggs/Savery (although sequence of meetings has not been determined). If the early dates are selected, we will need to get the word out to the print media very soon. Also, prep time will be short. For these reasons, the later dates may be more practicable. However, the Biology Committee has scheduled its next meeting May 31-June 1, and I’m reluctant to postpone these meetings until later in June. *(NOTE: Since this update was prepared, public meetings have been postponed.)*
- Who speaks and what information is presented at the meetings needs to be worked out. I expect Tom Pitts, Ray Tenney and Dan McAuliffe will make presentations in Colorado. I also expect Ben Beall, Dan Birch or another Colorado YRBP representative to speak. In Baggs/Savery, either John Shields and/or Larry Hicks probably will speak from Wyoming’s perspective. If they wish, they may also speak at meetings in Colorado.
- I will give a Powerpoint presentation of the plan and some of the analyses of alternatives behind it. I’ll also have a poster display of some of the key the tables of analytical data for anyone who wants to spend more time examining them. I also expect to set up the RIP display and offer general information about the Program. We should have ample time to set up at each venue, since it should take less than an hour to commute between sites. As soon as we nail down the dates, I’ll start shopping for venues.

GUNNISON MANAGEMENT PLAN/PBO UPDATE

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- Bureau of Reclamation has estimated future depletions based largely on anticipated growth in human population and concomitant M&I consumption. Water users want to include an increment for additional growth in the agricultural sector; they will provide BR with their estimates at the next full SWAT4 meeting in Montrose, May 10.
- Flow recommendations for the Gunnison River and Colorado River downstream from the Gunnison confluence have not been “finalized” pending another conference with WAPA, CREDA, and Upper Basin Water Users on April 30. BR awaits these recommendations before modeling its ability to satisfy them through its reoperation of Aspinall. While the flow recommendations may not substantially change, flows for different species and life stages may be segregated to allow flows to be adjusted to meet specific management and recovery objectives.
- The next Gunnison PBO workgroup meeting will be June 26 in Montrose. We hope to have a handle on human demands, fish flow needs and Aspinall’s ability to meet them, and an outline for a management plan for the basin. We will decide which elements need to go into the management plan; this will kick off development of the plan.

YAMPA NONNATIVE FISH CONTROL UPDATE
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The Biology Committee held a conference call on April 19 to discuss options for nonnative fish control on the Yampa beginning this year. The following items were adopted:

- John Hawkins will continue removing northern pike from the Yampa downstream from Craig concurrent with his Colorado pikeminnow population estimates. The effort will be expanded this year with the addition of another shocking boat, one boat on each side of the river working in tandem. However, Hawkins will not extend the reach he samples this year, because low runoff will limit his ability to cover the reach he sampled last year. Moreover, he will not remove any smallmouth bass from the river as this would preclude him from completing the pikeminnow estimates, which are his primary mission.
- Frank Pfeifer will field a crew to trap northern pike in spawning areas of the Carpenter Ranch and the Yampa SWA. Frank's crew will work traps in the morning and transport any captured pike to Rio Blanco Lake in the afternoon. This crew will also pick up pike captured by Hawkins' crew and deliver them to Rio Blanco, relieving Hawkins of that burden.
- The CDOW will carry out a pilot project to screen potential pike spawning areas to prevent pike from entering when these backwater areas connect with the river on the rising limb of the spring hydrograph. The Carpenter Ranch, Yampa SWA and other sites on private lands may be included with the cooperation of the affected landowners.
- The CDOW will request a variance from the Nonnative Fish Stocking Procedures to allow the Division to remove northern pike and/or smallmouth bass from the river and translocate them to Elkhead. Each of these fish would be marked. If a certain percentage (Nesler suggests 10%) of the marked fish are recaptured in the river, translocations to Elkhead would cease.